

What would Love do?

Beloved person,

'When does dawn break? Is it the moment when you can distinguish a dog from a sheep at a distance?' 'No,' says the Rabbi. 'Is it when you can distinguish a date palm from a fig tree at a distance?' 'No,' says the Rabbi. 'But what then?' ask the students. 'It is when you can look into the face of a person and see your brother or sister therein. Until that moment, the night is still with us.'¹

But how do you do that: to ensure the arrival of a 'new day' when the light in your soul does not rise like a dawn... when the ice in your heart still refuses to melt... when I do not see it—not because I don't want to, but because I am unable to?

There is a lot going on in the world, in the countries where we live, in society, and also in our own lives there are concerns about the world that can consume us. There are plenty of opinions, but how do I stay grounded if I don't yet have an opinion on something or don't want to have one?

From our philosophy, we gladly want to offer each other support: to continuously translate what we believe in, and are rooted in, into a loving attitude, into love that is expressed through behaviour. But in this turbulent reality, we also see that there are movements that cause us to drift further apart.

Bart Brandsma describes five roles² that occur in every situation where we drift apart from each other. These are: the instigator who firmly takes sides; the supporter who joins the instigator; the large middle group that often remains silent and does not take an open stance, the bridge-builder who tries to seek connections; the scapegoat who is excluded or seen as a problem. On a large or small scale, you will surely recognise it.

In addition to his explanation of these roles, he provides tools to practice them in everyday life. It is important not to ignore or soothe what leads to distance or misunderstanding. It is important to listen, to observe, and to remain open. It is important—especially as a bridge-builder—to be able to tolerate that harmony is still lacking. The words you use and the story you tell are important. Often, the middle group is a group whose attitude largely determines whether the distance increases or decreases.

It helps me to know this and recognise it because then I can better understand it. But sometimes my heart still does not accept it, even though I so much want to be close to Love. Then I pray that my heart can be flexible and that I can fulfill what I long for. And that I do not continue searching for what else I want, but that I am grateful for what there is. Time helps with this.

I also noticed that last week, when I watched the first episode of *Kijken met Caspers* (Watching with Caspers). It was about sand. You see how sand is formed. Charlotte Caspers says: 'I always thought that stone was something immovable. Something that stands firm, anchored in the earth, but also fixed in time, but it turns out it has its own cycle.'

It gave me an important insight that put my worries into a new perspective: you have to take the temporary seriously but not see it as absolute. Even the petrified will one day change form again. When, as in the episode, warmth is added, the solid form of colour, and even of texture, changes – how wondrous. With warmth, movement comes to what once seemed petrified. From the preceding, a new reality emerges.

How grateful I am that there are people with whom I can experience this.

*If room comes into my thinking,
everything will be different,
it gets new colour and shape.
I see an unexpected vista
and what once seemed a barren plain,
turns out to be fertile soil.*

*If there is room in my thinking,
I also live differently,
I see the beauty of humanity,
love becomes limitless.
Then I feel one with my origin,
because I'm being creative.³*

With a warm-hearted greeting, gladly your sister,

Nanda Ziere



We commemorate those who showed us what Love did

¹ From the book *A living in Love*, 1st August (Netherlands version).

² Bart Brandsma, *Polarization: insight into the dynamics of us-versus-them thinking*, Inside Polarisation VOF, 2016

³ Choir song 49, Text written by sister M. Slok-Zwaan (free translation).